

## VA Sonora Clinic Opens

The VA Palo Alto Health Care System is pleased to announce the VA Sonora Community Based Outpatient Clinic will open on April 1, 2002. Sonora Community Hospital has been chosen as our community partner to help provide clinical services for the veterans of Tuolumne and Calaveras Counties. They will supply the clinical providers, related clinical services and the site while we will administer and provide the support for the delivery of care. This model insures veteran's reliable access to primary care through our partnership with a wider medical provider network than the veteran population would have supported on its own.

The Sonora VA Clinic will serve as a medical primary care clinic and open with two internal medical providers (contracted) and supported by the following VA employees: two RN's, one Social Worker and two Business Office associates/clerks. Supervision will be provided by a Jill Thompson, Nurse Manager and Tom Kane, Administrative Officer who will rotate through Sonora, Modesto and Stockton. The Sonora VA Clinic will be open Monday through Friday 8:00 am to 4:30 pm. The outreach partnership located at the Tuolumne Veteran Service Office will continue and expand to include limited mental health services.

The Sonora Community Hospital is building a new modern hospital near Pauline Court that they hope to open in the spring of 2003. The Community Hospital has reserved a building near the

new hospital for us to expand the VA Sonora Clinic. This expansion will allow us to see the expected 3000 veterans from Tuolumne and Calaveras counties who will seek health care from us. We are currently working on a design for the new space that will accommodate four providers with up to eight exam rooms and hope to be in the new space by September 2003.

To ensure we are delivering timely and quality care to all veterans, we are requesting your assistance in the activation of this clinic.

I am asking those of you who have already established medical care with a primary care provider, at either the VA Modesto Clinic or the VA Stockton Clinic, to delay transferring your care. An orderly, planned transfer of your care to Sonora will occur as we add medical providers and expand our clinical facility.



VA Sonora Clinic 720 Pauline Court Sonora, California Telephone # 209-533-5470 Fax # 209-588-9651

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## A Word From Our Director



Elizabeth Joyce Freeman, Director VA Palo Alto Health Care System

n March 1, VISN 21 staff visited us to conduct our first quarter performance review. We con tinue to excel in the quality measures and are making progress in meeting our waiting time goals for audiology, cardiology, eye, orthopedics, primary care and urology. We are hovering at 3.9% growth compared to FY 2001 in enrolling and vesting new Category A veterans. We hope to end the year with 5% growth following the opening of the Sonora Community Based Outpatient Clinic in April and other outreach activities. We are slightly behind in our treatment of veterans in most Special Capacity programs and are taking steps to ensure we capture all workload, especially in these areas. We are also slightly behind in our MCCF activities. We are taking several steps to improve our insurance identification processes and to improve our collections of overdue accounts receivables. I am confident we will meet all of these goals and thank all of you for your efforts.

Goal sharing plans for our FY 2002 program were due March 15. As I prepare this message, we have received over 125 separate plans and more arrive each day. I am extremely pleased with the variety and creativity of the plans. Many of the plans support our highest priority performance goals. Many plans also include initiatives to improve our position as an employer of choice. I am especially impressed with the number of plans focused on improving veteran satisfaction. The plans demonstrate a strong understanding of what we are trying to accomplish with the goal sharing program - every individual employee makes a difference.

This month we will recognize our thousands of outstanding volunteers. They provide literally hundreds of thousands of hours of service and millions of dollars in donations for our veterans. Many of our volunteers are the "culture carriers" for our health care system. They have witnessed numerous improvements in our buildings, services and the quality of our care. Their passion for caring for veterans has spanned decades of service in many instances. We simply could not perform our mission of providing world-class health care for veterans without their assistance. Please take some time to thank the volunteers you see in the health care system each day. We all owe them a huge debt of thanks.

I want to offer a special word of thanks to all VAPAHCS staff. FY 2002 has presented some especially difficult challenges due to our budget constraints. Every service and department has felt the effects. We have faced some extraordinary challenges in the inpatient arena and continue to do so. While the pressures are great, your commitment to providing the highest quality of care is unwavering. As we continue to work through these budgetary challenges, please know how much Dr. Sheikh, Mr. Sisty and I appreciate your patience and perseverance. We need your cooperation and creativity more than ever. We always welcome your suggestions and participation. You have our sincere thanks for all your efforts.

Elizabeth Joyce Freeman Director, VAPAHCS

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## News

## Dekelboum Receives ACHE Regent's Award



Tracy Dekelboum received the American College of Healthcare Executives (ACHE) Early Career Healthcare Executive Regent's Award. The award was bestowed on Ms. Dekelboum by Ms. Freeman on behalf of Terrie L. Kurrasch, FACHE, Regent for California - Golden Gate. The Regent's Award recognizes ACHE affiliates who are experienced in the field and have significantly contributed toward the advancement of healthcare management excellence and the achievement of the goals of ACHE.

Ms. Dekelboum was evaluated on her leadership ability, innovative and creative management, executive

capability in developing her own organization and promoting its growth and stature in the community, contributions to the development of others in the healthcare profession, leadership activities and projects, and participation in College activities and interest in assisting the College in achieving its objectives.

The American College of Healthcare Executives is an international professional society of nearly 30,00 healthcare executives. ACHE is known for its prestigious credentialing and educational programs and its annual Congress on Healthcare Management, which draws more than 4,000 participants each year.

## Celebrating Women's History Month

During the month of March, we were reminded of the vast contributions women have made in our past, as well as provide a beacon of inspiration and encouragement for future generations. In celebration of Women's History Month, the Federal Women's Program Committee held a special program entitled "Women Sustaining the American Spirit of Courage and Vision" in recognition of the extraordinary contributions VAPAHCS women have made in the areas of personal development, community service, and professional accomplishment.

Consistent with this theme, the following women are recognized for their individual contributions to the VA Palo Alto Health Care System:

**Stephanie Alvarez** Nursing Service

Ruth Bailey
Physical Medicine
& Rehabilitation

Margaret Baldwin Nursing Service

**Cheryl Bowers**Nursing Service

**Ann Clemente** Medical Information

**Melissa Cooper** Dermatology Service

Loutricia Coulter
Business Office

**Gloria Farmer** Environmental Management Service

> **Karen Hopkins** Nursing Service

**Tina Lee, M.D.**Psychiatry Service

Margaret Matsuoka Nursing Service

Patricia McCarthy Nursing Service

Carolyn Odom Nursing Service

Catherine M. Park Social Work Service Sausha Polentz

Recreation Therapy Service

**Amy Tucker** Police Service

**Sherri Heim** Recreation Therapy Service

> **Dagmar Gallagher** Radiology Service



Employees interested in actively serving on the Federal Women's Program Committee may contact Janet Orand, FWP Manager, by calling extension 65877, or sending an e-mail message to Janet.Orand@med.va.gov or Orand.Janet@paloalto.va.gov.

## Changes at the Menlo Park Division:

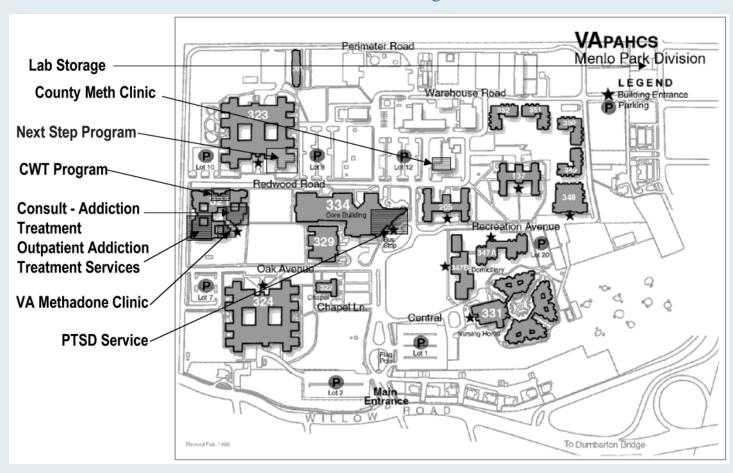
# Proposed moves of Building 137 occupants

In 1999, Degenkolb engineers, assigned by VACO to assess all seismically deficient buildings in VA, identified Building 137 as the second highest VA building in the nation for Exceptionally High Risk (E.H.R.) with regard to seismic evaluation.

In FY01, VISN 21 and Central Office approved funding minor project to demolish Building 137.

The clinical and administrative programs within Building 137 will be relocated to other seismically safe buildings on the grounds of the Menlo Park Division.

The Menlo Park Division map below indicates the proposed relocation of occupants of Building 137. Once all moves have occurred the demolition of Building 137 should occur in late fall.



### EMPLOYEE NEWS

#### New Employees

Environmental Mgmt. Svc.

Leo B. Boco

Michel Ferguson

Edward V. Simpson

Nursing Svc.
Katherine Blazer
Kimberly Mae Carter
Ann Chan
Simonnette Dayrit
Ylalaine Elefante
Ellen Huang
Lihua Liu

Noralyn Romero Fe Roque Sharon Shinn Catherine Smith Sandhu Sukwinder Sharon Wahl Marieta Womack

Nutrition & Food Svc.

Dennay Brantley

Gregory L. Elarms

Willie S. Harvey

Pharmacy Svc. **Laura O'Shea** 

Police Svc. **Anthony Gaudino** 

Psychology Svc. **Daniel Chatel** 

Research Svc.
Lori J. Nielsen
Aina Stunz
His-Ping Wang

#### Retirees

Medical Information Svc. Vickie Burns (16)

Nursing Svc.
Elizabeth Bayona (22)
Helen Cross (20)
Joan Harper (15)
Marilyn Smith (8)

(Years of service are indicated in parentheses.)

#### **Employee Service Awards**

#### 10 Years

Erlinda Dela Cruz Nursing Svc.

**Maria Espinosa** Nursing Svc.

**Aleti Gabayan** Nursing Svc.

**Ofelia Sanchez** Nursing Svc.

#### 15 Years

**Daniel Aguayo** Psychiatry Svc.

**John Carter** Nutrition & Food Svc.

> Rhonda Post Pharmacy Svc.

**Ian Silva** Engineering Svc.

#### 20 Years

Milagros Damatan Nutrition & Food Svc.

**Damien Falcon** Engineering Svc.

**Ralph Rabkin** Nutrition & Food Svc.

25 Years

**Eve Reaven** Research Svc.

#### Maryann Wilson Nursing Svc.

#### 30 Years

**Walter White** Engineering Svc.

#### 35 Years

**Warren Hampton** Engineering Svc.



## VA Palo Alto Health Care System Wins Award for Recycling!

Every year, the Federal Environmental Executive holds a competition called "The White House Closing the Circle Award". This program recognizes Federal employees and their facilities for efforts which resulted in significant contributions to or have made a significant impact on the environment in specific categories under Executive Order 13101: Greening the Government Through Waste Prevention, Recycling, and Federal Acquisition, and Executive Order 13148: Greening the Government Through Leadership in Environmental Management.

This year, our FY2000 entry "Recycling at the VA Palo Alto Health Care System in Y2K", won an award as the best VA program entry. Mr. Sam Brown, from VACO, toured our facilities recycling program last month as a result of our winning entry nomination.

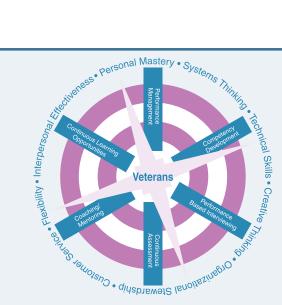
Thanks to everyone who made this possible by supporting our recycling efforts here at VAPAHCS!

Find out more about the Federal Environmental Executive and Greening the Government at http://www.ofee.gov/.

## CALENDAR OF TRAINING & EVENTS

EES=VA Employee Education System • HR=Human Resources • ORM=Office of Resolution Management • TQI=Total Quality Improvement • TBA=To be announced

DAY	DATE	SERVICE	TIME	PLACE	INFORMATION
Monday	4/1/02	Psychiatry	12-1pm	Menlo Park Bldg. T321 Conf. Room B119	Toni Zeiss, Ph.D. Clinical Approaches to Treatment of Sexual Dysfunction (Part 1)
Wednesday	4/3/02	Psychiatry	12-1pm	Menlo Park Bldg. 324 Rm E117	Gary Hartz, Ph.D. and James Hawkins, MD The Values History and Other Advanced Directives (Part 1)
Monday	4/8/02	Psychiatry	12-1pm	Menlo Park Bldg. T321 Conf. Room B119	Toni Zeiss, Ph.D. Clinical Approaches to the Treatment of Sexual Dysfunction (Part 2)
Wednesday	4/10/02	Psychiatry	12-1pm	Menlo Park Bldg. 324 Rm E117	Susan Dunn, RNP and Ann Ferris, MD Steroids and Psychosis plus a case presentation
Monday	4/15/02	Psychiatry	12-1pm	Menlo Park Bldg, T321 Conf. Room B119	Beata Chapman Update on Current Treatment available in L'facilities and the treatment outcomes
Tuesday	4/16/02	Medical/ Oncology	11-12:30pm	PAD Auditorium	Prostate Support Group
Wednesday	4/17/02	Psychiatry	12-1pm	Menlo Park Bldg. 324 Rm E117	Gary Hartz, Ph.D. and James Hawkins, MD Do you want to have your own advanced directive? (Part 2)
Wednesday	4/24/02	Psychiatry	12-1pm	Menlo Park Bldg. 324 Rm E117	Rhonda Post, PharmD Nutritional Supplements
Wednesday	5/1/02	Psychiatry	12-1pm	Menlo Park Bldg. 324 Rm E117	Julie Kasi-Godby, Ph.D Hospice and the elderly patient
Monday	5/6/02	Psychiatry	12-1pm	Menlo Park Bldg. T321 Conf. Room B119	Ellen Coman, Ph.D. Screening Measures in Neuropsychiatry: What Psychiatry
Wednesday	5/8/02	Psychiatry	12-1pm	Menlo Park Bldg. 324 Rm E117	Ellen Coman, Ph.D. The evaluation of the patient with aphasia
Monday	5/13/02	Psychiatry	12-1pm	Menlo Park Bldg. T321 Conf. Room B119	Jim Moses, Ph.D. The MMPI, MCMI and Personality Testing: How to Order, Interpret and Use These Measures Effectively
Wednesday	5/15/02	Psychiatry	12-1pm	Menlo Park Bldg. 324 Rm E117	Gary Hartz, Ph.D. Enhancing clinical evaluation and communication with Chinese American
Wednesday	5/22/02	Psychiatry	12-1pm	Menlo Park Bldg. 324 Rm E117	Bonnie Anderson, RN and Ann Jennings, RN Home based care and the elderly patient
Wednesday	5/29/02	Psychiatry	12-1pm	Menlo Park Bldg. 324 Rm E117	Lisa Sharp-Altouney, RNP Wound care in the elderly patient



# The High Performance Development Model

"Its good enough for government work." Have you ever heard and been offended by this cliché? It is true that historically government agencies did not have to compete for customers in the marketplace. They were not known for placing the same emphasis on quality and customer service standards. However, anyone making the statement today is not in step with "The New VA" and VAPAHCS.

In 1995, Deputy Undersecretary, Dr. Kenneth Kizer, stated that for the VHA to best serve the veteran and survive the competitive healthcare marketplace, a cultural transformation needed to take place. In his "Prescription for Change" he charges the "The New with the twin goals to become both the "provider and employer of choice". He advised that attainment of these goals would require the VHA to become a "learning organization, a leadership culture that can manage continuous learning, change and improvement by enhancing the skills of all employees." An organizational model that encompassed these goals needed to be adopted. The "High Performance Development Model" was the one chosen.

HPDM has both learning and management components. It aligns VHA around eight core competencies that apply to all employees at all levels. The eight core competencies are: organizational stewardship, systems thinking, creative thinking, flexibility, customer ser-

vice, interpersonal effectiveness, personal mastery and technical skills. Other important elements of the model are: continuous assessment, performance management, coaching and mentoring, performance based interviewing and continuous learning opportunities. The elements promote personal as well as professional growth. Attainment of the elements gives rise to VHA yearly performance measures VAPAHCS is a strong proponent of HPDM and handily meets all of the VISN performance measures. Many formal, informal and self paced learning opportunities are offered in support of HPDM. There are small HPDM "reference libraries" within each of the libraries at the Palo Alto, Menlo Park and Livermore Divisions. They contain excellent learning materials covering all of the HPDM components. Staff finds the materials to be very helpful for many aspects of their lives. Especially popular are the "Performance Based Interviewing" materials. These are said to be invaluable when preparing ones self to interview for a new position.

As we steadily progress toward the goals of "provider and employer of choice", more HPDM learning opportunities and activities will be taking place at VAPAHCS. If you'd like more information about HPDM contact Pat McCarthy Nursing Education (extension 65369) or Jackie Bevins in Human Resources.

## VA Services for Legally Blind Veterans

Diminishing eyesight does not mean that anyone needs to stop participating in things they enjoy. The VA's Visual Impairment Services Team (VIST) Coordinator program provides information on understanding and coping with vision loss. The VIST program is designed to assist veterans in learning how to adjust and adapt to vision loss. There are many resources and alternative techniques available to enable a visually impaired veteran to maintain an independent and full life. If you would like further information, contact Candace Thelen or Elizabeth Jessen at extension 64368.



## **Olympic Reflections**

## by Joni Drobick, Jennifer Foster and Morten Green



The theme, "Light the Fire Within," did that and more for Olympians and spectators alike at the 2002 Winter Games. "They really are larger than life and TV coverage doesn't do them justice," was the sentiment expressed by many of those who attended events at the outdoor venues Snowbasin, Deer Valley, Soldier Hollow and Olympic Park. The excitement of the spectators as they watched Olympians race downhill on skis, often at speeds greater than 70

m.p.h. or held their breath as they awaited the pairs figure skating results was beyond compare. It didn't seem to matter that for many of the spectators the day began, often before 5 a.m., with a drive into Salt Lake City to catch a bus in order to get to the mountain venues; or that the multiple layers of clothing donned prior to getting into lines to pass through the security checkpoints at each venue, sometimes just wasn't enough even with use of toe and hand warmers; or that there were lines for everything from security to snack bars to use of porta-potties (rows and rows of porta-potties!). The thrill of being there and part of something so incredibly grand was worth way more than the price of a ticket!

Everything was extremely well-organized and most lines moved quickly through the security checks. Volunteers were knowledgeable and polite. Approximately 30,000 were chosen from over 60,000 who applied to be the "good will ambassadors of the city" as volunteer guides, information givers and security assistants. There was never a sign of stress, conflicts were dealt with graciously and those attending events were frequently heard to remark how safe they felt.

Likewise, spectators too were cheerful and polite, even at some of the sub-zero locations surrounding Salt Lake City. They cheered for all the Olympians, not just those representing the United States. Some of the events, such as the Alpine Skiing events, have as many as 75 contestants. Nobody after the first 30 stood any chance of winning their event, and the course was usually so rutted out by the end that the later racers sometimes seemed to be hanging on for dear life! Some of the loudest cheering came when those later racers recovered from a near-crash disaster to finish the course. Most specta-

tors came equipped with various sizes of cheering bells because you can't hear applause from gloved and mittened hands! Even sledding events where spectators caught only a fleeting glimpse of the competitors generated waves of cheers and ringing of bells as the Olympians raced to the finish line. All of the events had enormous "Jumbo-trons" positioned so that parts of the event not seen could be watched. Speed skating and ski jumping events had remote controlled cameras that moved around the rink or down the hill with the competitors and then projected their images onto the giant screens.

Every night, medals won the prior day were awarded at Olympic Plaza and music groups such as Smashmouth and Brooks and Dunn played to record crowds of paying ticket holders, as well as to those who were outside the outdoor amphitheater just hanging out hoping to catch a glimpse of the gold around the neck of one of the medal holders.

Now, as our memories of the Games of the 19th Olympiad come to rest, just as layers of sweaters, long johns, hats, ski socks, parkas and snow boots do, we thank those who celebrated humanity with their Olympism, Citius, Altius, Fortius!





Upper left: the bottom of the men's downhill skiing course. Above, top: men's cross-country skiing. Above: the Olympic Village.

## You Make a Difference!

Submitted by our veterans and their families. We welcome more contributions from LVD, Stockton, Modesto, San Jose, and Monterey.

I want to inform you of the wonderful service I received from **Ana Coulter**, at the VA Palo Alto Hospital. I was waiting in line at the front counter in **Admissions and Eligibility** when a nice, professional employee came by and stated, "Good morning, my name is Ana, and how may I help you?" After finding a place where we could talk, she made me feel exceptionally comfortable, understood my situation, and put my mind at ease. She gave me service anyone would be glad to receive worldwide. I left your facility with the impression that this is the type of environment I would refer to someone if the need ever arises. Ms. Coulter is an outstanding employee.

The entire **Optometry Staff** at the **San Jose Clinic** was enthusiastic and professional. They made my visit very comfortable and I'm proud of the service they were providing to me on behalf of the VA.

**John Garvey** (PAD), **Voluntary Service**, is always courteous, smiling, and loved by all patients for his positive attitude. He gives information and directions to visitors and family. He is well regarded by the veterans.

Every time I come into the Dental Clinic, **Colene Petersen** (LVD), **Dental Service**, greets me with a professional attitude. She also treats me nice and with care.

**Debbie Pitsch** (PAD), **Physical Medicine & Rehabilitation Service**, was very courteous, as well as intelligent. She gave extra support for physical examinations and medical attention. She answered the medical questions that I asked.

I am a 12-year veteran and have been in the VA Palo Alto Health Care System for about five years now. **Dr. Irene Rademaker**, **Medical Service**, in Livermore is my general medicine physician. In my opinion, she is the best doctor I've ever had. More than once she has booked me into her heavy schedule and even called me after hours or on a weekend to check on my health. I would also like to commend **Anna Ferrulli**, **Nursing Service**, one of your clerks in Livermore. She is always so courteous and helpful. I have watched other veterans around here and they say the same thing. Anna is definitely #1 in their book as they walk away smiling.

**Boyd Wolfe** (PAD), Biomedical Engineering Service, maintains and repairs all the Dental Service equipment and works hard to keep everything in top running condition. He responds to all requests within a short time frame. He does more than requested, often finding items that need attention before they become problematic. Cheerful and always a pleasure to work with, Boyd makes it a joy to work at the VA.

Mary Evans (MPD), Nursing Service, is truly concerned with the welfare of her patients. She helped me add names to the list of authorized people to call me. She always has a smile and a kind word. When a patient made inappropriate comments, Mary handled the situation in a professional manner and with grace. She is an asset and a great VA care provider.

**Raymond Battle** (PAD), **Animal Caretaker**, has repeatedly done extra rooms to help complete the tasks we need to have done. He really shows that he really cares and wants everyone around him to do better. He came up with new room logs to help better understand what we are doing in the rooms.

# Administrative Professionals Week: 50 Years of Recognizing Excellence

Administrative Professionals Week - April 21-27, 2002 Administrative Professionals Day - Wednesday, April 24, 2002

The observance in 2002 marks the 50th anniversary of Administrative Professionals Week/Day (APW/APD). It was established as an effort to recognize secretaries for their contributions in the workplace, and to attract people to secretarial/administrative careers. Two years ago the name changed for Professional Secretaries Week and Professional Secretaries Day to Administrative Professionals Week and Administrative Professionals Day to keep pace with changing job titles and expanding responsibilities of today's administrative workforce.

Over the years, Administrative Professionals Week has become one of the largest workplace observances. The event is celebrated worldwide, bringing together millions of people for community events, educational seminars, and individual corporate activities recognizing support staff with gifts of appreciation. Although the purpose of the celebration is sometimes altered, and even maligned, by other groups and individuals, a tremendous amount of publicity is obtained for the profession during this time.

Today, there are more than 3.9 million secretaries and administrative assistants working in the United States, according to U.S. Department of Labor statistics, and 8.9 million people working in various administrative support roles.

## **April Word Search**



#### Find the following words in the letters above:

April Fools Awareness Daughter Daylight Savings Earth Day Family Good Friday Health Nutrition Professional Safety Secretaries Day Spring Volunteer Women's Day



#### **Did You Know?**

April is ...

- Alcohol Awareness Month
- National Autism Awareness Month
- Child Abuse Prevention Month
- National Occupational Therapy Month
- National Humor Month

The week of April 14-20 is Patient Advocacy Week & National Organ and Tissue Donor Week.

World Health Day is April 7th.

Administrative Professions Day (formerly Professional Secretaries Day) is April 24th.

## epicenter enter

is published monthly by and for employees of the VA Palo Alto Health Care System.

Submissions should be received by the 1st working day of the month to be included in upcoming issues. Due to space limitations, it is not possible to publish all submissions.

We welcome any comments, suggestions or story ideas you may have; please contact the Communications Officer (00A) at ext. 64888 or directly at 650-858-3925.

#### VA Palo Alto Health Care System

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